

Week ending Friday, June 30, 2000

**Statement on Action To Prosecute
for the Killing of United States
Department of Agriculture
Inspectors**

June 23, 2000

Today the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California filed a complaint charging an individual with the intentional killing of two U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors in the course of their duties. I want to commend Federal and local law enforcement for working so quickly to investigate and prosecute this important case. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the victims, their families, and the community during this difficult time.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Remarks at a California State
Democratic Party Reception
in Los Angeles, California**

June 23, 2000

The President. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, before I start my speech, there's one other thing I want to say. There's somebody else here I want to introduce, and I want to ask to come up here.

When we nominated Al Gore—we haven't formally, yet, but when he got through the primaries—he's the only candidate in our party's history in a contested primary, including me, who went all the way through the primaries and didn't lose a single one. And I want to bring up Bill Daley's partner, Donna Brazile, our campaign manager for the Gore campaign. Come on up here, Donna. Thank you.

I thank Joe Andrew for his leadership. And I want to thank Terry McAuliffe for coming in here to help us get this convention financed and get it off to a good foot. It sounds

strange, but I'm grateful to Bill Daley for leaving my Cabinet—[*laughter*]—because he's going to lead the Vice President to victory. So I thank them all.

I want to say a couple of things about—first, I thank Art for reminding you that I kept my word—[*laughter*]—and I'm glad to be here. In 1995 a Presidential scholar named Thomas Patterson surveyed all the campaign commitments made by the last five Presidents and said by '95, I had already kept a higher percentage of my commitments than my five predecessors. And we've got a higher percentage now, thanks to you, and I thank you for that.

I would like to say just a few things to you. First, I am grateful that we are having this convention which will be, as you know, my farewell convention as President, in the State of California.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not going to shrivel up. I'll be around. [*Laughter*] But listen, I'm grateful that we're having this in California because so much of the texture of my campaign in '92—the energy, the ideals, the passion—was borne out of the inspiration I received from the pain and the faith, from the longing and the idealism that I saw in California in 1992, when we had a terrible economy, a profoundly divided society, and a level of political rhetoric that was making it worse.

And I asked you to give me a chance to turn it around. And starting with the California Democrats, you did. And you didn't give up on me. The day after I won the Democratic primary in California, they said, "How dumb are they? Clinton is in third place in the polls." There were all these people talking about the polls. They remember it. In June, I was in third place, at 25 percent. I've been buried more times than the undertaker's old suit. [*Laughter*] But you didn't quit because you had this idea that we could do something together to make a difference.

And then, after I got in, California had earthquakes, fires, floods—[laughter]—everything but the lotus arrived for you. [Laughter] And we just kept plugging away and didn't give up. And now, we had to rebuild a freeway, rebuild Cal State, Northridge. We had to do a lot of things, but I did try to help. And I appreciate that.

So 7½ years later, thanks to your work and your faith and the support I got from the people of California, along with Al Gore and our whole team, we've got the longest economic expansion in history and the highest homeownership in history and over 22 million new jobs and the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rate ever recorded and a 20-year low in poverty, a 25-year low in crime, a 32-year low in the welfare rolls. The air is cleaner. The water is cleaner. The food is safer. We set aside more land to be protected in history in the lower 48 States than anybody but the two Roosevelts. And we had the most diverse administration, the most diverse appointments to the courts in history, and we've been a force for peace and freedom and decency around the world. I'm proud of what we did in Kosovo—that caused me to have to miss my last chance at you. It made a difference. We stood up against ethnic cleansing.

Now, I'm grateful for the chance you gave me to serve and to do that. What do you want to do with that? That's the big issue in this election. In 1992 we knew what the deal was. I mean, the economy was in the ditch; California was in trouble; all the golden era seemed to be washed away. We knew what we had to do. We had to turn this country around. We had to prove it would work again. We had to pull people together. We had to move forward. It turned out it worked.

Now, the big question now is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? And what I want to say to you is a couple of things. Number one, I appreciate your support for me, but I didn't do it alone. Al Gore has done more good for more people as the Vice President than anybody that ever held that position, ever, by far. By far.

When no—not one—Republican would vote for our economic plan, he cast the tie-breaking vote. When we knew 6 years ago we had to do something to close the digital

divide, we came here in California, began to wire the schools. At the time, only 16 percent of our schools were connected to the Internet; today, 95 percent are—only 3 percent of our classrooms connected; today, 75 percent are. He did that. He led our empowerment zone program, which has brought opportunity to poor areas. He managed a lot of our foreign policies. He cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate on whether we would try to close the gun show loophole, and have child trigger locks. No Vice President in the history of this country ever had such a big impact in the Office of Vice President. A lot of them went on to be great Presidents—Teddy Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson—but none of them had any impact as Vice President remotely approximating what this man has done. He is the best qualified person to run for President in my lifetime.

Now, the second thing I want to say is, we could have been compassionate and caring and hard working and eloquent. And if our ideas had been wrong, we still wouldn't be in very good shape. Now, we have tested our ideas. They said—the other side, our friends in the Republican Party—when we presented our economic plan, it would wreak havoc; it would cause a disaster; the deficit would go up; the economy would be in the tank. That's what they said. If you will notice, they're not running their quotes about my economic policy in this election. [Laughter]

Then when I was advocating the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and the 100,000 police they said, "Oh, these cops won't do any good," and, "This law won't keep any guns out of the hands of criminals." And now we've had a 35 percent drop in gun crime and a 25-year low in crime and a 30-year low in homicide, and you don't hear them criticizing our crime policy publicly anymore. I don't know why they're not publicizing their positions on all these issues.

And every time we tried to have cleaner air, cleaner water, set aside more land, you know, it was a "land grabber;" it was going to "break up the economy." And now you don't hear that.

So the second thing I want to say to you is this. This is a real important election. It's just as important as '92 and '96 were. What

a country does with its prosperity is just as stern a test, if not a sterner one, of our character and our judgment as what we do in times of distress.

In my lifetime we have never had a chance like this. The last longest economic expansion we had in American history was in the 1960's. When I graduated from high school in 1964, I thought it was going to go on forever. I didn't think anybody could mess it up. [Laughter] I thought—I did. And I was optimistic. Lyndon Johnson was my President. I thought all these civil rights problems were going to be solved in the courts and the Congress, not in the streets. I didn't believe we'd get all mired down in Vietnam.

Four years later, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed here, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President because the country was too divided. And just a few months later, the longest economic expansion in American history was history. Nothing lasts forever, folks. We're going to be judged by what we do with what we have built over the last 8 years. That's what this election is about.

Now, I will remind you, there are differences between us and the Republicans—the second point I want to make. [Laughter] But they matter. What I'm saying is—and it's not like we hadn't had a test run here. [Laughter]

So the three points are: It's an important election; there are real differences; the third point you've got to remember is, only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. [Laughter] Why is that? Because we've had a test run here. They want to talk about how the economy is so prosperous, and we've got this big projected surplus so we can spend it all on a tax cut and on their plans to partially privatize Social Security and build a missile defense system and that kind of stuff. We can just spend it all.

Well, I would like to remind you that that word is "projected." Al Gore says, "No, no. Let's save at least 20 percent by taking your Medicare taxes and walling it off and using it to pay down the debt and protect it for Medicare, because it may not materialize. And we don't want to go back to the bad

old days of deficits and high interest rates and putting California's economy at risk and America's economy at risk."

Now, it's not like we hadn't had a test. We did it their way for 12 years and our way for 8 years, and our way works better. People need to understand that.

Now, look at crime. They tried to abolish my program to put 100,000 police on the street. They opposed the Brady bill. They opposed the assault weapons ban. They won't close the gun show loophole. Now they're trying not to do the 50,000 more police that I want. And it's not like we hadn't had a test. We tried it their way for 12 years and our way for 8 years. Our way works better. Crime goes down more.

And they say if they get in they will reverse my order for 43 million roadless acres in the national forests. The Audubon Society says it's the most significant conservation move in the last 50 years. Al Gore says, "I'll keep it, but I'll do better. I'll build on it." And they say all this stuff we're trying to do to clean up the air and the water is just terrible for the economy. I tell you what, if I was trying to hurt the economy with my environmental policies, I've done a poor job of it. [Laughter]

So they say they won't be so tough on this clean air, clean water, safe food, all this environmental stuff. Now wait a minute. We tried it their way for 12 years and our way for 8 years, and we proved you can make the economy very strong and make the environment cleaner at the same time. It's not like we hadn't had a test.

So I want you to tell people this: It's an important election; elections are about the future; there are real differences. We want you to know what the differences are.

And I want to make this last point. It's also important that we have a leader who understands the future. Al Gore understands the implications of the information technology revolution. He understands the implications of the foreign policy changes happening all around the world that will affect our children's lives. He understands the challenges that ordinary families face in this new economy. He and Tipper Gore were holding an annual family conference in Nashville, Tennessee, even before I named him to be

Vice President. And so much of the things that we have done, from family and medical leave to parity for mental health in health insurance policies, are things that came out of the work he and Tipper did.

So people ask me—I say, “I’m for Vice President Gore because he’ll keep the prosperity going, because he’ll do more to spread it to people and places left behind and to help all American families, and because he understands the future and can lead us there. I am for the Democrats in the Senate and the House races.” And you’re going to give us, by the way, four or five new ones out here in California alone. And I’m for them. And I have a special interest in one in New York, as you know. *[Laughter]* But I’m for them because we’ve had a test run here.

And if you listen to this rhetoric in the campaign, you know the Republicans never talk about their primaries. They’re hoping you’ll forget that and have amnesia. *[Laughter]* And all the commitments they made, and all the things they said, and they really don’t want to talk about, they want this to be a blur. They want you to think that nobody could mess up this economy. Take your tax cut and run.

And it’s kind of like a—they kind of want you to say, “Well, their fraternity had it for 8 years. Give it to ours for a while.” *[Laughter]* Let me tell you something, this is about people’s lives, folks. This is about our children’s future. You’ve got to go out and tell people in California and beyond California, because we’ve been here a lot. I’ve been here more than any President ever had. *[Laughter]* You know what’s going to—you live this, and you have—here in California, you have a searing memory of what it was like in 1992. You remember what it was like.

So you need to reach out across the country. And in this convention and after the convention, you need to say to the American people, “Hey, we don’t want a negative campaign. We want a positive campaign. We don’t want to say anything bad about our opponents, personally. We want to assume that they’re honorable, and therefore, they will do exactly what they say.” *[Laughter]* But we don’t want them to be too selective with you in pointing out our honest differences. So we want this to be a campaign in which we hon-

estly expose our differences, and we measure those differences against the experience we have had.

And then we say to people—you’ve got to make this about the future. We may never have a time like this in our lifetime, and we owe it to the children in this room and throughout this country to build them the future of our dreams. We can do that.

And if we make that the issue, then Al Gore and his new running mate will be elected, my favorite candidate for the Senate and a lot more will be elected, and Dick Gephardt will be the Speaker of the House. And we will get what we should get because we have delivered for the American people.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in the Century Room at the Century Plaza Hotel & Spa. In his remarks, he referred to William M. Daley, general chair, and Donna L. Brazile, campaign manager, Gore 2000; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; and Art Torres, chair, State Democratic Party. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Saxophone Club Reception in Hollywood, California

June 23, 2000

The President. Well, thank you very much. I never thought I’d live to hear Bill Maher say those things. *[Laughter]* And he said it in front of the press, which means he’ll have to dump on me twice as hard next week. *[Laughter]* But it’ll be worth it. I love it. Thank you, Bill. Thank you, Vivica. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to thank our hosts for having us here. I was coming over here with my buddy Terry McAuliffe tonight, and he said, “Now, tell me where we’re going?” He’s a good, Irish-Catholic boy. I said, “We’re going to a place called the Garden of Eden.” *[Laughter]* He said, “We can’t go.” *[Laughter]* I said, “Why?” He said, “They’ll accuse one of us of being in search of original sin.” *[Laughter]* But here we are, and they did a nice job for us. Thank you very much, all